

The background is a complex abstract composition of geometric shapes and light rays. At the top, a series of light beige rays radiate downwards. Below these, there are horizontal bands of dark blue and light beige. A large, curved, dark blue shape arches across the middle. In the center, a green gear-like logo with the letters 'MC' inside is the focal point. From this logo, a series of light yellow rays radiate outwards. Below the logo, there are two large, yellow, cone-like shapes. At the bottom, a large, curved, green shape with a dark blue base is visible. The overall effect is one of dynamic movement and modern design.

# 2014 Annual Report

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENTS



**DAVID G. PETERSON**  
MBA President



**FRANCIS DEISINGER**  
MBA Foundation President

Welcome to the Milwaukee Justice Center's 2014 Annual Report. In these pages, you will find the MJC's story, told in numbers, photos, and client interviews, of how it is fulfilling its mission of increasing access to justice within the Milwaukee area.

Thousands of our fellow Milwaukee citizens face civil legal problems, but are unable to afford private attorneys to assist them or do not qualify for publicly-funded civil legal aid under the current economic guidelines. Compounding the problem, the severe budgetary pressures on existing legal aid organizations mean that approximately 80% of those eligible for free legal services cannot obtain them.

Many of those people look to the MJC—at the Courthouse and in the community through the Mobile Legal Clinic—for assistance navigating the complexities of the civil legal maze. Since 2009, the MJC has served almost 53-thousand individuals in self-help forms assistance and brief legal advice. Based on 2014 performance, for every dollar spent on the MJC through charitable contributions, the community received more than \$11.03 of value in the form of volunteer legal help.

We are grateful for the success of the MJC to date, but it is not time to sit back. For the MJC to continue to help the thousands of civil litigants that it serves, the MJC needs your financial support. When lawyers and other community members support the MJC, they all reaffirm the principle that meaningful access to justice, regardless of economic circumstances, is a civic necessity.

It is our honor to ask for your help in assuring that meaningful access to justice remains a reality in our community. Your donation to the MJC helps serve the basic civil legal needs of some of the most vulnerable in Milwaukee. Please send your contribution to the Milwaukee Bar Association Foundation, 424 E. Wells Street, Milwaukee, WI 53202. You may also contribute online at the MJC's website: [www.MilwaukeeJusticeCenter.org](http://www.MilwaukeeJusticeCenter.org).

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# LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the MJC,

A strong foundation is critical to future success—something that is true in an organization as it is in home construction. The MJC is lucky to have such a foundation, built through its dedicated partners—Marquette University Law School, the Milwaukee Bar Association, and Milwaukee County—its generous donors, and its committed volunteers. In 2014, this strong foundation has allowed the MJC to usher in a new era, within a newly renovated space, of increasing access to justice in Milwaukee.

One of the most poignant changes occurred in the fall when Executive Director Dawn Caldart accepted a new job opportunity and moved on after 5 years with the MJC. Dawn, who received the 2014 Marquette Law School “Howard B. Eisenberg Alumni Award for Public Service,” was a member of the MJC team since 2009. Dawn's influence and leadership were critical in the expansion of MJC hours and client services and, importantly, in the development and design of a permanent location in Room G-9 of the County Courthouse. We are grateful for Dawn's years of service to the MJC and wish her much success in her new position.

In July 2014, the MJC opened its doors in the new G-9 suite, providing a warm and inviting space for both those seeking assistance and the volunteers providing it. The new space offers more private consultation areas, added self-help desk cubicles, as well as conference room and classroom spaces. Clients and volunteers alike have shared positive feedback with their experience in the new space. We encourage you to stop by to view our new home—or, even better, volunteer your time at the MJC!

In addition to the above events, other exciting moments led to 2014 being yet another transformative year at the MJC:

- The Mobile Legal Clinic received two state-wide awards and one national recognition for its innovative approach to legal services.
- The Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee began offering a weekly brief legal advice clinic at the MJC focusing on foreclosure assistance.
- MJC Volunteers helped to expand bilingual (Spanish/English) self-help forms assistance to the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinics on Wednesday evenings.
- Finally, in the fall, the MJC team welcomed several new staff members from each of its partners.

Truly, we are thankful to all of you who contribute to the strong foundation and continued accomplishments of the MJC. We look forward to building on this success, together, to serve the thousands of our neighbors who seek access to justice in Milwaukee. Thank you, all!

Mary L. Ferwerda  
Executive Director

## Milwaukee Justice Center Committee

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**Hon. Timothy Dugan**  
Milwaukee County, Branch  
10

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**Hon. Beth E. Hanan**  
U.S. Bankruptcy Court, WI Eastern District

## Milwaukee Justice Center Staff

**Mary L. Ferwerda**  
Executive Director

**Angela Cunningham**  
Legal Director

**Omar Mallick**  
Attorney Supervisor

**Justin A. Metzger**  
I.T. Analyst

**Samantha Yee**  
Clerical Assistant



# MEET THE MJC

# BY THE NUMBERS



BA-1993 Creighton  
MS-2001 Creighton  
JD-2011 Marquette

Mary began with the MJC in 2013 as the Attorney Supervisor and coordinator of the Mobile Legal Clinic. She became Legal Director in 2014, and was named Executive Director in 2015.

Before law school, Mary worked in university administration at Marquette and Creighton Universities.

Mary enjoys reading, traveling, and hiking with her dogs. She lives on the east side with them, and her Peace Corps Volunteer cousin Emilie.



BS-1993 Wisconsin  
MSW-2000 Wisconsin  
JD-2012 Northwestern

Angela has spent most of her professional life in service to those in need. Prior to attending law school, Angela worked with the Kenosha County Dept. of Human Services, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America's Outreach Center.

Since earning her J.D., she has gone on to work with Legal Action of Wisconsin's Kenosha office before joining the MJC.

Angela, an avid reader, lives in Kenosha with her son Shawn.



BS-2007 Marquette  
JD-2010 Hamline

Omar joined the MJC in 2014, having previously worked as a civil rights attorney in the Twin Cities, and a solo practitioner here in Milwaukee. He is originally from Chicago, but grew up in Milwaukee before attending Marquette for undergrad.

As of May 2015, Omar has returned to a more involved solo practice that includes criminal defense, unemployment law, and business law.

Omar lives in Brookfield, and enjoys gardening and traveling.



BA-2004 Illinois State  
MA-2010 Indiana

Justin originally came from the broadcasting and news industry, having served as a newscaster for WTMJ-AM, a TV producer in Madison, and an Adjunct Instructor for the Indiana University School of Journalism.

He is now both the go-to guy for making all the technology in the MJC work, and for getting the word out about our activities in print and online (like this report!).

Justin, a Hoosiers fanatic, lives in Goldman Park with his wife, Ayame, and son, Emmett.



BA-2014 Marquette

Samantha, or "Sam," started with the Milwaukee Justice Center in the middle of 2014 as our new Intake Specialist. Since then, she's been the first person MJC clients and volunteers see, as

they enter the clinic.

Sam started out as an administrative intern in 2013, and after some other service opportunities, including Habitat for Humanity, returned to the MJC when the opportunity to do so arose.

Originally from the northwest Chicago suburb of Niles, she lives on the East Side, and loves to bike, eat, make food, help people, and really enjoys being part of the community that is Milwaukee.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

### WALK-IN FORMS

7,062

FA  
OD  
RV  
MI  
SC  
+E  
438

BRIEF  
LEGAL  
ADVICE  
1,773

APPO  
INTM  
ENTS  
600

## CLIENTS SEEN

9,884

VOLUNTEERS: 429

HOURS DONATED: 8,052

## VALUE OF SERVICE:

\$927,126

## AGE

<24	25-34	35-44	45-54	>55
8%	38%	28%	16%	10%

## ETHNICITY

60%	AFRICAN AMERICAN
18%	CAUCASIAN
14%	LATINO
8%	MIXED/OTHER

## GENDER

54%	46%
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## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

50% \$0-\$1,000

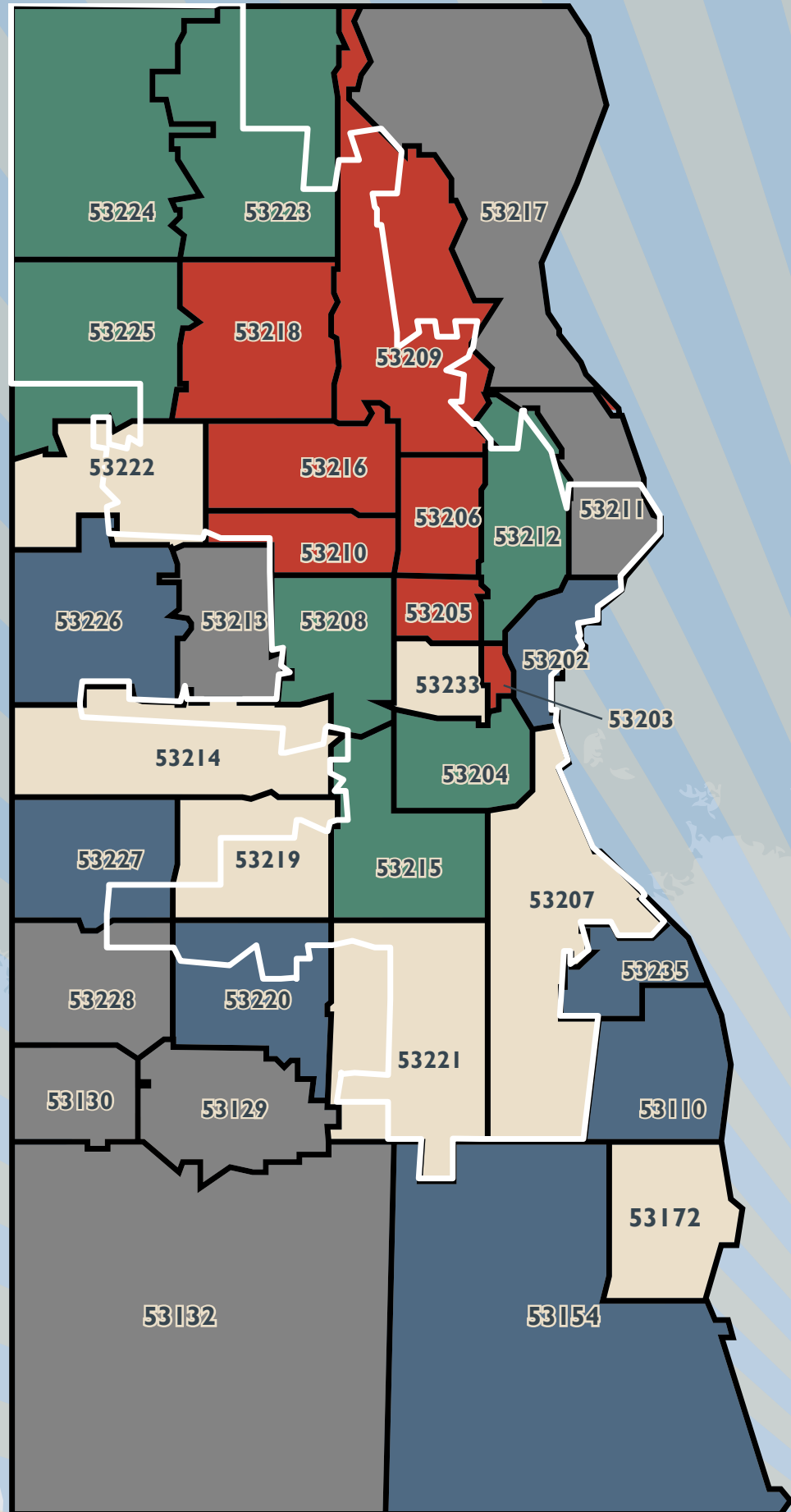
32% \$1,001-\$2,000

11% \$2,001-\$3,000

7% \$3,000+



# CLIENT LOCATION DATA



	ZIP	NUMBER	V/S. POP*
Red	53206	656	2.32%
	53205	215	2.14%
	53218	809	1.99%
	53216	627	1.94%
	53210	529	1.88%
	53203	17	1.81%
Green	53209	834	1.78%
	53225	411	1.60%
Dark Green	53208	473	1.52%
	53212	454	1.49%
Light Green	53204	628	1.48%
	53224	259	1.22%
Yellow	53215	713	1.17%
	53223	341	1.17%
Orange	53233	163	0.99%
	53221	296	0.79%
Light Orange	53214	245	0.71%
	53222	173	0.69%
Light Yellow	53219	208	0.61%
	53172	123	0.58%
Dark Yellow	53207	203	0.58%
	53110	105	0.57%
Dark Blue	53220	144	0.55%
	53227	114	0.49%
Light Blue	53235	42	0.45%
	53202	99	0.42%
Dark Blue	53154	114	0.33%
	53226	52	0.28%
Light Blue	53130	21	0.27%
	53228	36	0.25%
Light Blue	53129	35	0.25%
	53213	54	0.21%
Light Blue	53132	70	0.20%
	53211	59	0.17%
Light Blue	53217	44	0.15%
	Outside MKE Co.	354	

\*Population information based on 2010 US Census data by Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA). Per the US Census Bureau, ZCTAs are generalized areal representations of US Postal Service Zip Code service areas. See more at: <https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/zctas.html>

**B**y all accounts, the Mobile Legal Clinic has been a success in its initial year! Staffed primarily by volunteer attorneys from Michael Best & Friedrich, the Mobile Legal Clinic held 12 clinics, serving 99 clients at 7 different locations in 2014. For its efforts, the Mobile Legal Clinic was recognized with two state-wide awards and one national recognition.

**The Mobile Legal Clinic partnered with the following organizations in 2014**

- Agape Community Center
- Centro Hispano
- Milwaukee Public Library–Forest Home location
- Muslim Community Health Center
- United Community Center
- Woodlands Resource Center
- YMCA-Parklawn and Northside locations



## Press and Awards

- December 2013: “Big Ideas of 2013”, Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel
- August 2014: Inaugural Wisconsin Innovation Awards Recipient, Forward Fest
  - November 2014: “Top 15 Innovative Legal Clinics,” National Jurist
  - December 2014: “Top 5 Legal Innovations,” State Bar of Wisconsin





# CLIENTS' VOICES

Alexis came home one day to find her stuff missing from her home and the doors locked. It turns out, the home's property manager, who claimed to be the landlord, evicted her.

"I lost my televisions, my kids' beds, my son's toys, clothes for both my son and my newborn baby," Alexis bemoaned. "My son had new shoes I got him for school. Now my kids are living in a shelter. So I just have to do everything I can and put things back together one by one."

Alexis said the property manager even used various racial epithets at her in the process. So she came to the MVLC to see what options were available.

After sitting down with one of the volunteer attorneys and a Marquette law student, she says her prognosis looks good.

"[The law student] is going to graduate soon from all the research he did, and the attorney was really helpful!" Alexis said with a chuckle. "Everyone was very helpful, and I understand what I need to do now."



**ALEXIS**  
MIDTOWN

**GREENFIELD**  
**MIKE & MARY**



Mike and Mary had a home that was very important to them. After getting married, they moved into Mary's home, but Mike didn't want to sell his, as he'd raised his children there. So, they rented it out.

"The tenants lied to us," Mike said. "We're very Christian, trusting people."

They said the tenants left unpaid rent, power shut off, and a water bill for \$1,000 they are responsible for.

"They only paid rent once on time," Mike said. "But I can understand with certain jobs, pay can be unpredictable, so we lived with that."

They came into the MVLC looking to find out what, if anything, could be done.

"We have a direction to go, and we have the paperwork" said Mary. "I feel much better now that I have some direction. There is a little light at the end of the tunnel."

"People were polite, professional, with a sincere attempt to help -- which was most appreciated! Options were discussed and may help me go forward. I am very grateful that you provide this service for those of us that otherwise have no hope for legal advice."

**THERESA**  
MUSKEGO WAY

Kim came to the Milwaukee Justice Center's forms clinic to modify her child support orders, and file a contempt motion. "The volunteers were excellent listeners. My experience with your clinic has been positive. The mentors are respectful to the law students as well. Thank you for providing this service and keeping a friendly atmosphere."

**CARL**  
ESTABROOK PARK

By the time she left, she received help filling out both motions, and plenty of procedural information to make sure everything was filed correctly. "[The volunteers] were extremely helpful with their advice. We got the extra days we needed and the landlord waived all the damages and money owed to him. Thank you very much."

**ANTHONY**  
WAHL PARK

"Everything was explained clearly and [the volunteer] made everything simple," Kim said. "She reiterated the instructions several times so I wouldn't forget."

"It is a huge weight off of me. I'm a single mom, I work full time, I'm taking care of two boys, and this was a big thing taking the time off to come down here. This whole process was smooth and easy."

**MCGOVERN PARK**  
**KIM**



"They were so helpful as to what my next step could be. A couple of different options were provided and I left feeling empowered and on track. Many thanks to the both of them. How wonderful it is to see a successful lawyer give back to the community on a volunteer basis."

**LORI**  
JACKSON

Vernil came into the forms clinic because his son was living with him, and he needed to make it official.

"I didn't know what to do," he said, after showing an agency had recommended he file a Modification. However, after some legwork done by MJC volunteers, they found he could just file a Stipulation, and save Vernil a lot of time, money, and headaches.

"I feel relieved the process isn't going to be as long as I thought."

**SANDRA**  
KOPS PARK



**VERNIL**  
BRADY STREET



# VOLUNTEERS' VOICES

David and Ben found one of the most difficult cases they've come across one October afternoon, when a mother came in to the MVLC saying she only had months left to live, and wanted to make sure her young, developmentally-delayed son was taken care of.

Mother said the father was not in a position to take care of the child due to alleged drug problems.

"We quickly realized this was not the area of expertise for the clinic," David said. "We recommended the Children First program as an organization that can accomplish what she's looking for. We got the name of a person for her to contact, and a date and time for them to get in touch."

Both Ben and David agreed that, if she could get the father to agree to alternative arrangements, that the chances of her getting the child placed where she wanted were excellent.

"She was very optimistic when she left," David reported. "And I'm feeling very good about it."



**BEN WALKER**

2L, MARQUETTE LAW SCHOOL

**DAVID A. BLUMBERG**

LAW OFFICE OF DAVID A. BLUMBERG

LAW OFFICES OF ROBERT A. LEVINE  
MICHAEL G. LEVINE



Michael Levine has been volunteering at the Marquette University Legal Clinic at the MJC almost since its inception in 2009.

"I just feel obligated to give pro bono legal help, and this is a way that, as a lawyer, I feel that I can meet my obligation," Michael said. "I used to be a public defender, and I think pro bono service is just a part of our obligations as a lawyer."

His work now has recently started shifting from criminal toward civil, though, he says, that is not his full-time speciality yet. However, the civil law focus of the MVLC presents a challenge he enjoys.

"My view as a lawyer is if there is a problem, a legal problem, you can find the solution," Michael said. "And I think most of the cases I've seen here aren't really cases, but people who needed to know where to go and what solutions there are other than running to the court."

"The MJC is relevant to the career I hope to pursue, and I believe in its mission as legal aid of any sort is difficult to come by. The staff are friendly, positive, and dedicated to the mission of helping the public of Milwaukee."

**DAN BALK**

SENIOR, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

"I chose the MJC because I wanted a more hands-on experience than your basic internship. I have liked getting to know our staff and my fellow volunteers because we all have such different backgrounds."

**CLAIRE DELMAN**

SOPHOMORE, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Kasey Parks started volunteering with the Marquette Volunteer Legal Clinic at their House of Peace location in her 1L year. In the summer before her 2L year, she moved over to the MJC.

"I came because of the variety of clients and cases, and the opportunity to apply what we're learning in classes to real cases," Kasey said. "And now I come back because the space is so nice!"

Kasey says her professional interest is in contract and sports law, but likes coming here because it is a good way to use her knowledge to help people without "multi-million dollar contracts."

"[The MJC] has helped me ask the right questions, and understand people can be going through a lot."

2L, MARQUETTE LAW SCHOOL  
KASEY PARKS

"I really enjoy the people I work with, and all that I am learning. My favorite part is knowing that I am actually helping people with their problems."

**MORGAN GALUSHA**

1L, MARQUETTE LAW SCHOOL

"The best experience comes when an individual who needs help says, 'thank you, I've been trying to do this for a long time and you are the first person to help me do it.'"

**DAVID KARP**

KARP LAW OFFICES, S.C.

"I feel every time I come here I'm helping someone, and not wasting my volunteer time... Sometimes people without attorneys appear to get railroaded, and I don't think it should be that way. Not everyone can hire an attorney!"

**TRISHA FRITZ**

STATE PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE

"At its best, [the MJC] helps people help themselves, and we empower them to get through the court successfully. It feels good when you help someone and you've left them better than you found them."

**KYLA MOTZ**

FREUND LAW OFFICE



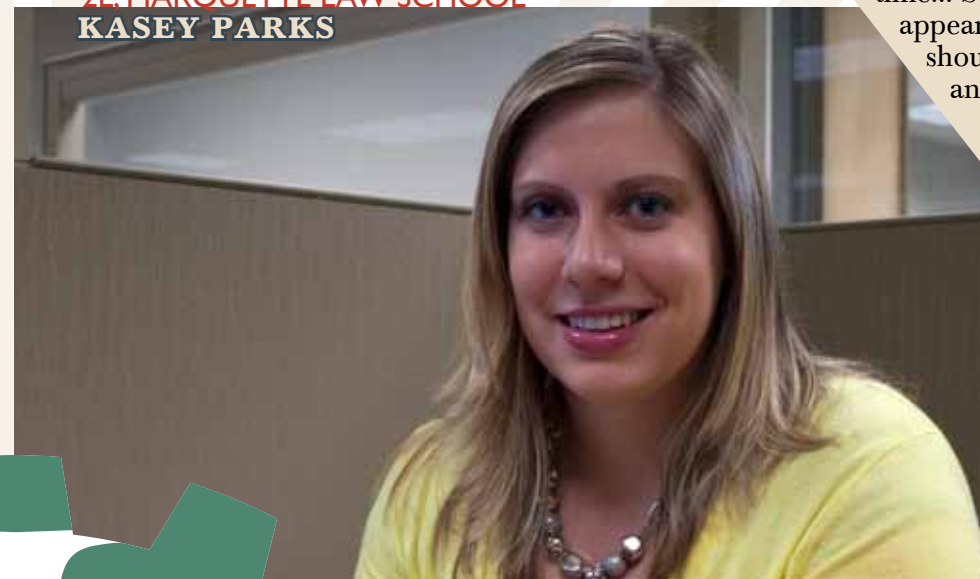
**ERIKA JEFFERSON**

SENIOR, MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

Erika has been focused on a career in family law from a young age. A native of Washington, DC, she came to Marquette for the education, and from there, came to the MJC.

"What drew me here is family law, and family law is what I want to do," Erika said. "And knowing that I can both help people and dip my foot into what I want to do is really nice."

Erika has been here for three semesters, and will be attending Hofstra School of Law in the fall.





# MJC CLINIC RENOVATION



2009 - APR. 2013



APR. 2013 - NOV. 2013



NOV. 2013 - JUL. 2014



JUL. 2014 - TODAY

It had been a long time in the planning, but the end result was beautiful. The new Milwaukee Justice Center clinic in G-9, along with its neighbors, the Milwaukee Legal Resource Center and Milwaukee County Civil Records Center, threw open the gates and officially rededicated the facility on September 15.

The first day of business in the renovated space was July 7, 2014, after a long week of moving, reorganizing, and continuing to assist clients in our temporary space on the fifth floor of the Milwaukee County Courthouse.

A couple weeks later, the Milwaukee County Law Library moved into their new, expanded space across the common area. The Civil Records Center opened up in time for the rededication ceremony in September.

"The new and vastly improved location for the Justice Center and the Legal Resource Center will be a tremendous asset for Milwaukee County Residents," said District 1 Chief Judge Jeffrey Kremers. "Our legion of pro bono attorneys can now meet with people in a dignified setting that maintains an appropriate level of confidentiality."

The setting allows us to help far more clients at a single time than has ever been possible before at the Milwaukee Justice Center.

The MJC started off as a single desk sitting in the middle of the hallway on the seventh floor, and first moved into G-9 in 2009, utilizing four bank teller-style windows (seen top left). In April of 2013, Clerk of Circuit Court John Barrett moved all of his clerks offices in G-9 upstairs, clearing out the space behind our windows for us to use as the first phase of the expansion (seen second from the top, left), allowing us to double our capacity to eight clients at a time.

In November 2013, plans for demolition and construction were solidified. Clerk Barrett moved the remainder of his Civil Records Center to a window in his main office in Room 104,



while the MJC moved up to a smaller room in 511, allowing us to help up to six clients at a time, though we still had the ability to overflow into the hallways when needed.

Finally, after all the walls had been torn down and moved, the paint went up, the flooring went down, and all the cabling got run, the MJC was the first to move into the new space. Now, we have the ability to serve twelve to fourteen clients at a time.

"[The new space] allows our volunteer lawyers and law students the opportunity to meet and help unrepresented litigants in a dignified space," remarked Clerk of Circuit Court John Barrett. "Unrepresented litigants are already going through tough times, so it's my hope that the frustrations of courthouse processes will be diminished when individuals can go to one place for help."

At the rededication ceremony, attended by both members of the public and benefactors of the Justice, Legal Resource, and Records Centers, Chief Judge Kremers remarked on the "one-stop-shop" element of the facility, saying it is an "amazing collaboration" between the various stakeholders, and he was not the only one to note the

collaborative effort.

"The Milwaukee Bar Association is grateful to Milwaukee County and to all of our donors who made these needed renovations possible," said Milwaukee Bar Association President David G. Peterson (Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, SC). "The success of the recent renovations, together with the proven success of the services offered by the MJC, are a direct result of the collaborative efforts between the Milwaukee Bar Association, Milwaukee County, and the Marquette University Law School."

At the rededication, retired District 1 Chief Judge Michael Skwierawski, one of the biggest driving forces behind the formation of the MJC itself, said the center had already succeeded "beyond the wildest dreams of those who imagined it," and was providing service to the exact populations it was targeted towards.

Marquette Law School Associate Dean Matthew Parlow remarked the MJC's redevelopment is "important work that furthers human dignity." MBA Foundation President Fran Deisinger (Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren, SC) said 500 members donated funds.



CLERK OF COURT  
JOHN BARRETT



HONORABLE  
JEFFREY KREMERS



HONORABLE  
MICHAEL SKWIERAWSKI



MBA FDN. PRESIDENT  
FRAN DEISINGER



MULS ASSOC. LAW DEAN  
MATTHEW PARLOW





## Children Come First



**HON. MARSHALL B. MURRAY, BRANCH 43**

The Hon. Marshall Murray has been serving the Milwaukee County Circuit Court's Family Division since 2012, however, he's spent most of his time on the bench dealing with issues regarding children and families. Originally appointed to the bench by Gov. Tommy Thompson in 1999, Judge Murray has spent almost every year of his service in either Children's Court or presiding over Domestic Violence cases in the Misdemeanor Division. Now, a member of the Family Division, Judge Murray has seen up close the difference the Milwaukee Justice Center makes in the results for both litigants and the courts.

"I think the [Milwaukee] Justice

Center does a great job getting clients prepared for what the judges are thinking, and what they need to do," Judge Murray said. "For instance, if there is a house in dispute, they need to get that house appraised. If there are debts, they need to fill out the paperwork showing what the debts are. And I think people who listen to the MJC do all that. Those that don't, their cases get held up, and we have to try and process these cases in 360 days."

Judge Murray says he's seen a big difference in the viewpoint of litigants as they take similar issues out of Children's Court, and litigate them in Family Court.

"I think the Milwaukee Justice Center helps [people forgive]. It's the first step to moving forward, and letting go of the past."

Specifically, he says it seems parents are united with each other against the State in Children's Court cases. However, when issues regarding child custody, placement, and support come before a family judge, suddenly those parents are no longer united, and view each other as the opponent. Yet he's been able to take his experience in Children's Court and apply it to Family, and believes the MJC acts as a partner in that endeavor.

"I tell people that just because you have come to an agreement, you are not necessarily accepting the other person's behavior," Judge Murray said. "You are forgiving them and looking to move on. I think the Justice Center helps them do that. It's the first step to moving forward and letting go of the past."

Judge Murray says, many times in Family Court, while representation is helpful, it is not always necessary. He says some people just need someone to tell them they are divorced and they are happy.

"There's a piece of paper from the MJC that tells you what to do. If you do that, you'll be okay," Judge Murray said. "Getting a divorce is fairly simple if you do the work."

## \$30,000

- FOLEY & LARDNER, LLP
- MICHAEL HUPY HUPY & ABRAHAM, S.C.

## \$10,000-\$29,999

- GENE & RUTH POSNER FOUNDATION, INC.
- ROBERT & LINDA LARIE DAVIS
- ROBERT L. HABUSH HABUSH HABUSH & ROTTIER S.C.

## \$5,000-\$9,999

- BRUCE O'NEILL FOX, O'NEILL & SHANNON, S.C.
- HERBERT H. KOHL CHARITIES, INC.
- von BRIESEN & ROPER, SC

## \$1,000-\$4,999

- CHRISTY BROOKS von BRIESEN & ROPER, s.c.
- PETER BRUCE DAVIS & KUELTHAU, s.c.
- D. MICHAEL GUERIN GIMBEL REILLY GUERIN & BROWN LLP
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